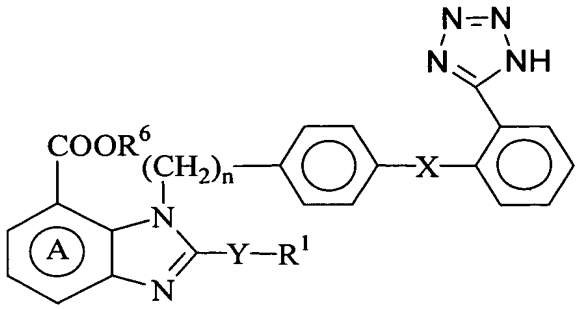
IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Cancelled)

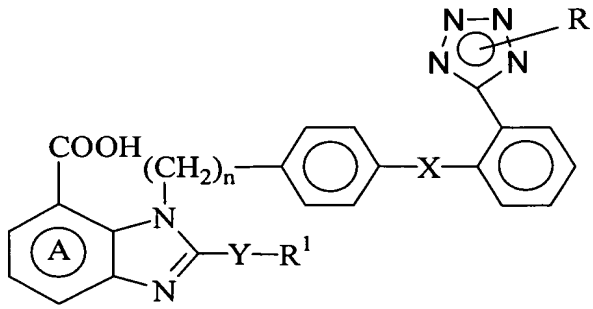
3. (Previously Presented) A method for producing a compound represented by the formula:



(Iq)

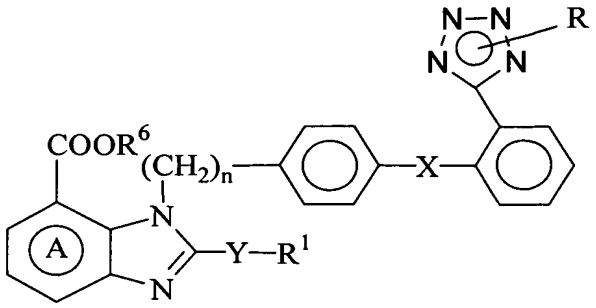
wherein the ring A is a benzene ring which may be substituted in addition to the group of -$COOR^6$ group; R^1 is hydrogen or an optionally substituted hydrocarbon residue; X is a direct bond or a spacer having an atomic length of two or less between the phenylene group and the phenyl group; Y is -O-, -S(O)m- or -$N(R^4)$- wherein m is an integer of 0, 1 or 2 and R^4 is hydrogen or an optionally substituted alkyl group; R^6 is a lower (C_{1-6}) alkyl optionally substituted with lower (C_{2-6}) alkanoyloxy, 1-lower (C_{1-6}) alkoxycarbonyloxy; n is an integer of 1 or 2; or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, which comprises;

(i) reacting a compound represented by the formula:



(Io)

wherein R is triphenylmethyl, 2-tetrahydropyranyl, methoxymethyl or ethoxy methyl, and the other symbols have the same meanings as defined above, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof; with an alkylating agent to give a compound represented by the formula:

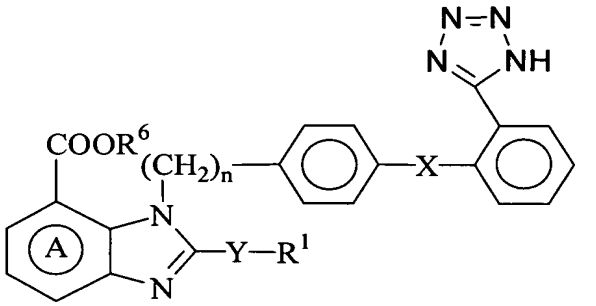


(Ip)

wherein each symbol has the same meaning as defined above; or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof; and then,

(ii) deprotecting the compound (Ip) or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

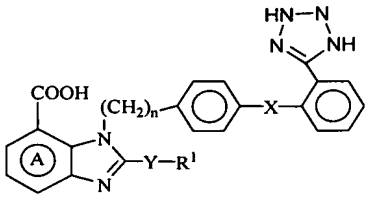
4. (Previously Presented) A method for producing a compound represented by the formula:



(Iq)

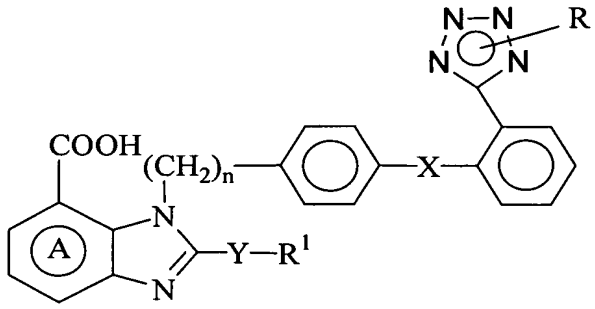
wherein the ring A is a benzene ring which may be substituted in addition to the group of $-COOR^6$ group; R^1 is hydrogen or an optionally substituted hydrocarbon residue; X is a direct bond or a spacer having an atomic length of two or less between the phenylene group and the phenyl group; Y is -O-, -S(O)m- or $-N(R^4)-$ wherein m is an integer of 0, 1 or 2 and R^4 is hydrogen or an optionally substituted alkyl group; R^6 is a lower (C_{1-6}) alkyl optionally substituted with lower (C_{2-6}) alkanoyloxy, 1-lower (C_{1-6}) alkoxycarbonyloxy; n is an integer of 1 or 2; or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, which comprises;

(i) reacting a compound represented by the formula:



(In)

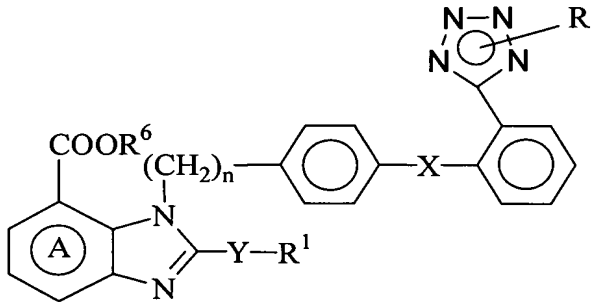
wherein each symbol has the same meaning as defined above, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof with an alkylating agent to give a compound represented by the formula:



(Io)

wherein R is triphenylmethyl, 2-tetrahydropyranyl, methoxymethyl or ethoxy methyl, and the other symbols have the same meanings as defined above, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof;

(ii) reacting the compound (Io) or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof with an alkylating agent to give a compound represented by the formula:



(Ip)

wherein each symbol has the same meaning as defined above; or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof; and then,

(iii) deprotecting the compound (Ip) or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

5. (Previously Presented) A method according to claims 3 or 4, wherein R^1 is an optionally substituted alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, or aralkyl group.

6. (Previously Presented) A method according to claims 3 or 4, wherein R^1 is an alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, or cycloalkyl group, which may be substituted with hydroxyl, an optionally substituted amino group, halogen or a lower (C_{1-4}) alkoxy group.

7. (Previously Presented) A method according to claims 3 or 4, wherein R^1 is a lower (C_{1-5}) alkyl or lower (C_{2-5}) alkenyl group optionally substituted with hydroxyl, an amino group, halogen or a lower (C_{1-4}) alkoxy group.

8. (Original) A method according to claim 6, wherein the alkyl is a lower alkyl group having 1 to about 8 carbon atoms, which may be straight or branched.

9. (Original) A method according to claim 8, wherein the lower alkyl group is unsubstituted or substituted with hydroxyl, an optionally substituted amino group, halogen or a lower (C_{1-4}) alkoxy group.

10. (Previously Presented) A method according to claims 3 or 4, wherein R^1 is a lower alkyl group having 1 to about 8 carbon atoms.

11. (Original) A method according to claim 5, wherein the aryl group is phenyl which may be substituted with halogen, nitro, lower (C_{1-4}) alkoxy, or lower (C_{1-4}) alkyl.

12. (Original) A method according to claim 5, wherein the aralkyl group is phenyl-lower (C_{1-4}) alkyl which may be substituted with halogen, nitro, lower (C_{1-4}) alkoxy, or lower (C_{1-4}) alkyl.

13-21. (Cancelled)

22. (Currently Amended) A method according to claims 3 or 4, wherein the ring A is a benzene ring which may contain, in addition to the <u>-COOR^6</u> [[R']] group, a substituent being

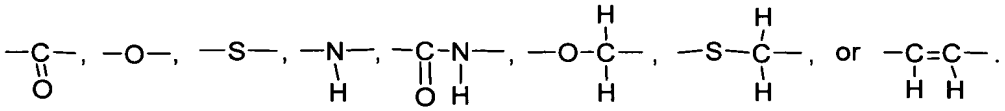
selected from the group consisting of halogen nitro, cyano, optionally substituted amino, a group having the formula: -W-R^{13}

wherein W is a chemical bond, -O-, -S-, or $-\overset{\overset{O}{\|}}{C}-$,

and R^{13} is hydrogen or an optionally substituted lower alkyl group, a group having the formula: $-(CH_2)_p$-CO-D wherein D is hydrogen, hydroxyl, optionally substituted amino, or optionally substituted alkoxy, and p is 0 or 1, tetrazolyl optionally protected with an optionally substituted lower alkyl group or an acyl group, trifluoromethanesulfonic amide, phosphoric acid, or sulfonic acid.

23. (Currently Amended) A method according to claims 3 or 4, wherein the ring A is a benzene ring which contains no substitution in addition to the -COOR^6 [[R']] group.

24. (Previously Presented) A method according to claims 3 or 4, wherein X is a chemical bond, lower (C_{1-4}) alkylene,



25. (Previously Presented) A method according to any one of claims 3 or 4, wherein X is a chemical bond between the phenylene group and the phenyl group.

26. (Previously Presented) A method according to claims 3 or 4, wherein Y is -O-, -SO_m- wherein m is 0, 1, or 2, or -N(R^4)- wherein R^4 is hydrogen or an optionally substituted lower (C_{1-4}) alkyl group.

27. (Previously Presented) A method according to claims 3 or 4, wherein Y—R^1 is -N(R^4)-R^1 wherein R^1 and R^4 are taken together with the N atom attached thereto to form a heterocyclic ring.

28. (Cancelled)

29. (Original) A method according to claim 3 or 4, wherein the alkylating reaction is conducted in the presence of a base.

30. (Previously Presented) A method according to claims 3 or 4, wherein the deprotecting reaction is conducted under acid condition.

31. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 3 or 4, wherein the alkylating agent is a halide.

32. (Original) A method according to claim 4, wherein the alkylating agent used in the reaction (i) of compound (In) with alkylating agent, is selected from triphenylmethyl chloride and methoxy methyl chloride.

33. (Original) A method according to claim 3 or 4, wherein the alkylating agent used in the reaction of compound (Io) with alkylating agent, is selected from cyclohexyl 1-iodoethyl carbonate, ethyl 1-iodoethyl carbonate, and pivaloyloxymethyl iodide.

34. (Cancelled)

35. (Original) A method for producing 1-(cyclohexyloxycarbonyloxy)ethyl 2-ethoxy-1-[[2'-(1H-tetrazol-5-yl)biphenyl-4-yl]methyl]benzimidazole-7-carboxylate or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, which comprises reacting 2-ethoxy-1-[[2'-(N-triphenylmethyltetrazol-5-yl)biphenyl-4-yl]methyl]benzimidazole-7-carboxylic acid or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof with an alkylating agent, and then subjecting the resulting compound to deprotecting reaction of the tetrazole group.

36. (Original) A method for producing 1-(cyclohexyloxycarbonyloxy)ethyl 2-ethoxy-1-[[2'-(1H-tetrazol-5-yl)biphenyl-4-yl]methyl]benzimidazole-7-carboxylate or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, which comprises (i) reacting 2-ethoxy-[[2'-(1H-tetrazol-5-yl)biphenyl-4-yl]methyl]benzimidazole-7-carboxylic acid or a pharmaceutically acceptable

salt thereof with an alkylating agent to give 2-ethoxy-1-[[2'-N-triphenylmethyltetrazol-5-yl)biphenyl-4-yl]methyl]benzimidazole-7-carboxylic acid or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, (ii) reacting the resulting compound with an alkylating agent, and then (iii) subjecting the resulting compound to deprotecting reaction of the tetrazole group.